

April 9, 1970

Dear Myron:

I had another question to put to you that I did not want to get mixed up with the other material.

I am sure you have had plenty of input on the refrain that the overdeveloped U.S. economy is gobbling up all the world's raw material resources at a rate that will preclude the eventual modernization of the less developed countries. I am clipping a few examples of this to be sure you know what I mean.

I have been trying to find the truth that may be at the center of this kind of self-flagellation, and am not too happy with the kinds of statistics I have been able to put together. What I would be looking for would be a tabulation of (1) world production of various categories of raw materials and of major classes of manufactured products, (2) U.S. production of the same, and (3) U.S. consumption of the same, apportioned between domestic and foreign production. Parts of (2) and (3) are not too difficult to get hold of, but I am having trouble getting (1) on a comparable basis. What I believe to be misconceptions about this issue are very prevalent, and, I think, ideologically quite harmful. This is not to discard the issue out of hand, but I would like to see it stated in more legitimate terms. What I think is overlooked by some of the statements in this field is that the U.S. is a major producer as well as consumer of many of the products in question.

I assume that you should be able to put together these kinds of numbers from within the department with almost zero effort and, quite apart from responding to my personal request for this information, I think it would be a very worthwhile bulletin to have published if this is not already a routine item.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg